

On page 9, before the paragraph beginning at line 12, please insert the heading
 -- DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION --.

On page 14, first line, change "CLAIMS" to -- WHAT IS CLAIMED IS --.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-21 as presented in the underlying International Application No. PCT/ DE00/02590 and any substitute claims, and please add new claims 22-35 as follows:

22. (New) An actuating device for a parking brake in motor vehicles, comprising
 a toothed segment which is arranged on a bridge-type support of the vehicle body;
 a brake-actuating lever which is articulated on the bridge-type support;
 a coupling unit which tensions a brake cable in accordance with displacement of the
 brake-actuating lever;
 a fixing catch which is articulated on the brake-actuating lever and interacts with the
 toothed segment;
 a catch spring for prestressing the fixing catch in the direction of the toothed segment;
 and
 a linkage which can be actuated along the brake-actuating lever, wherein the linkage
 displaces the fixing catch out of engagement with the toothed segment counter to the prestressing
 of the catch spring,
 wherein the catch spring is designed as a compression spring,
 wherein the fixing catch is designed as a double lever,
 wherein the double lever comprises one end facing away from the toothed segment,
 wherein the catch spring is arranged outside the linkage and engages on said one end of
 the double lever, and
 wherein the linkage is decoupled from the fixing catch when not in the actuating state.
23. (New) The actuating device according to claim 22, wherein the double lever comprises a
 long lever that faces away from the toothing, and wherein a stop point is provided on said long

lever against which one end of the linkage, which end is remote from a handle of the brake-actuating lever, strikes in the actuating state.

24. (New) The actuating device according to claim 23, wherein the stop point is arranged on a side of the long lever that faces away from the catch spring.

25. (New) The actuating device according to claim 22, wherein the fixing catch comprises a short lever which faces the toothed segment, wherein the short lever is provided with an engagement lug which, when engaged with the toothed segment, fixes the brake-actuating lever in its applied position.

26. (New) The actuating device according to claim 22, wherein the linkage comprises an axial guide at its rear.

27. (New) The actuating device according to claim 26, wherein the axial guide is formed by a slot which is formed in the rear end of the linkage and in which a pin, fastened to the brake-actuating lever, engages.

28. (New) The actuating device according to claim 27, wherein the slot has a longitudinal axis and the catch spring has a main axis, wherein the longitudinal axis of the slot and the main axis of the catch spring are arranged essentially parallel.

29. (New) The actuating device according to claim 22, wherein the linkage comprises a push rod which is guided in an axially displaceable manner and is connected rigidly to a push button.

30. (New) The actuating device according to claim 29, wherein the push rod and the push button are acted upon continuously by the load of a compression spring which is supported on the brake-actuating lever and acts counter to the release direction.

31. (New) The actuating device according to claim 22, wherein the fixing catch is designed as a sheet-metal pressed part.